



DORCHESTER COUNTY 2002 AGRICULTURAL PROFILE

Dorchester County is located in the south central portion of the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Water nearly surrounds the county, with only 20 land miles in its 333 miles of boundaries. The Chesapeake Bay, Choptank and Nanticoke Rivers are major waterways. Dorchester is the largest county on the Eastern Shore with 356,855 acres. Thirty- four percent or 122,928 acres is devoted to agriculture. Much of the southern portion of the county is freshwater marsh or tidal saltwater marshlands. There is, however, much good farmland in that area with a loam or clay loam soil type. The area north of Route 50 is more suitable for vegetable production due to the sandier soil and good drainage.

In 2000, Dorchester had a population of 30,674. Cambridge, the County seat, had a population of 10,911. This is basically an agricultural area, but also supports several industries, and because of its proximity to the bay and rivers, supports a thriving seafood industry. The Blackwater Wildlife Refuge attracts many tourists each year, as well as a diverse wildlife population. Dorchester has many historic sites, including Old Trinity Church, Spocot Windmill and Christ church, where several former Maryland governors are buried.

Agriculture provides the major economic base for the county with most of the acreage in field crops and vegetables. Livestock, including poultry, pork, and beef also plays an important role. The greatest percentage of land is devoted to field crops, much of which goes to provide feed for the shore's livestock industry. Many of the vegetable growers sell their large volume of produce through auction blocks, wholesale markets or processing plants. Smaller fresh market operations sell at local road site stands or the farmer's market located in Cambridge.

DORCHESTER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

<i>Crop</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Acreage Harvested</i>	<i>Average Yield</i>	<i>Total Production</i>
Corn for Grain	2000	Bu.	19,700	153.1	3,016,000
	2001		21,600	134.3	2,901,000
	2002		23,000	69.6	1,600,000
Corn for Silage	2000	Tons.	*	*	*
	2001		*	*	*
	2002		*	*	*
Soybeans	2000	Bu.	57,400	42.2	2,425,000
	2001		57,600	40.1	2,311,000
	2002		46,500	18.0	837,000
Wheat	2000	Bu.	16,000	65.8	1,052,400
	2001		14,000	64.3	900,000
	2002		14,400	71.3	1,027,000
Hay	2000	Tons.	900	2.2	2,000
	2001		1,000	2.0	2,000
	2002		700	2.0	1,400
Barley	2000	Bu.	3,800	74.4	282,800
	2001		3,600	77.4	278,800
	2002		3,400	82.6	280,800

<i>Crop Production</i>				<i>Livestock Inventories</i>	
<i>Rank among MD. Counties, 2002</i>				<i>Rank among MD. Counties, 1997 ¹</i>	
Corn	8	Oats	3	Cattle	23
Wheat	5	Barley	5	Hogs	10
Hay	21	Soybeans	5	Sheep	3
				Milk Cows	3

DORCHESTER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

<i>Farm Number & Size</i> ¹		1987	1992	1997
Number of Farms		392	347	297
Average Size	(acres)	319	357	414
Land in Farms	(acres)	125,019	123,762	122,928
<i>Livestock (Number on Farms)</i> ¹				
Cattle Inventory		881	979	651
Hog Inventory		28,853	15,591	2,529
Sheep Inventory		²	31	²
<i>Value of Sales</i> ¹			(\$1,000)	
All Products		51,509	64,089	82,391
Crops		15,031	26,129	34,488
Livestock, Poultry, and Poultry Products		36,478	37,960	47,903
<i>Equine, 2002</i>				
<i>Equine Inventory</i>	<i>Value of Equine Inventory</i>	<i>Number of Equine Places</i>		
	<i>1,000 dollars</i>			
460	5,280	160		
Cash Rents				
		2000	2001	2002
Cropland	<i>dollars per acre</i>	73.05	73.58	67.50

¹ Source: Census of Agriculture, NASS.

² Not published to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

³ Unranked - Data not published.

⁴ Revised.

* Acreage too small to publish.